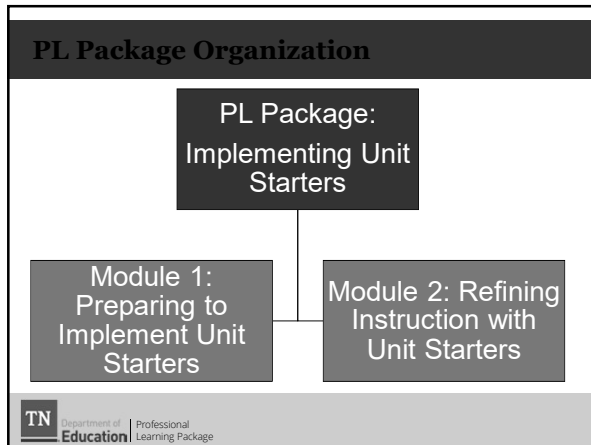
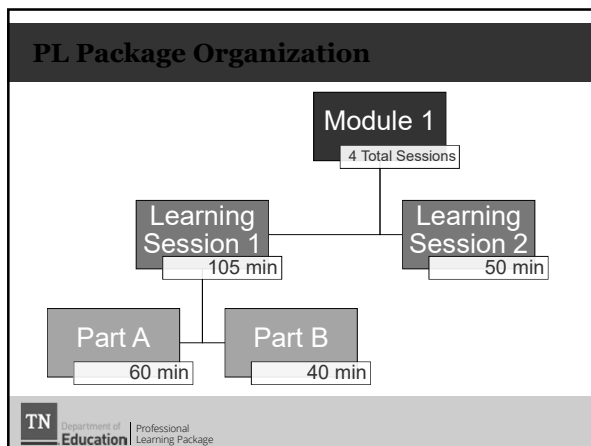


**Professional Learning Package:
Implementing Unit Starters**





Guiding Questions for Module 1

- What is a Unit Starter?
- Why teach with Unit Starters?
- What resources are included in the Unit Starter?
- How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?
- How are concepts and understandings organized in the Unit Starter?
- How are concepts and understandings supported by the Unit Starter's texts, tasks, and question sequences?
- How can I prepare to teach with the Unit Starter?

Guiding Questions for Module 2

- What growth did students make as a result of engagement with the Unit Starters?
- What growth did I make as a teacher as a result of engagement with the Unit Starters?
- How can I refine my instruction moving forward?



Module 1: Preparing to Teach with Unit Starters *Learning Session 1*

Module 1 Learning Sessions

Session	Guiding Questions	Time
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a Unit Starter? Why teach with Unit Starters? What resources are included in the Unit Starter? How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction? 	1 hour 45 min
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are concepts and understandings organized in the Unit Starter? 	50 min
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are concepts and understandings supported by the Unit Starter's texts, tasks, and question sequences? 	3 hours 30 min
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I prepare to teach with the Unit Starter? 	1 hour

Group Norms

- Be fully present.
- Actively participate.
- Embrace collaboration.
- Keep students at the center.



Learning Session 1


- Guiding questions:
 - Part A (60 min)
 - What is a Unit Starter?
 - Why teach with Unit Starters?
 - Part B (40 min)
 - What resources are included in the Unit Starter?
 - How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?



Part A: What is a Unit Starter?

What is a Unit Starter?

- A K-3 Literacy Unit Starter is a set of instructional materials that includes texts, question sequences, and tasks. The materials are purposefully designed for literacy instruction that develops knowledge of concepts related to grade-level content area standards.




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What is a Unit Starter?

- Take **five minutes** to explore the Unit Starter you plan to teach. Find the following components:
 - A **unit overview** that describes the desired results for learners
 - The **unit content goals**, which include enduring and disciplinary understandings
 - A list of **texts** that support strong interactive reading and shared reading experiences
 - The **end-of-unit task**
 - The **daily task** and **question sequence** for the first lesson of the unit



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What is a Unit Starter?

- What will students learn in this unit?
- How will they learn it?

What is a Unit Starter?

- Unit Starters are instructional materials designed to support planning for English language arts instruction in kindergarten through third grade classrooms.
- They include a set of appropriately complex texts for interactive read aloud and shared reading experiences, daily tasks, question sequences, and an end-of-unit task.
- All materials are designed to develop literacy skills and understandings and build knowledge of concepts related to grade-level science and social studies standards.
- Materials are designed for all students as part of core instruction.

Unit Starters support teachers in:

- **Connecting to** the content of **Tennessee Academic Standards** for English language arts and science or social studies
- **Building students' content knowledge** through the study of appropriately complex texts
- **Teaching conceptually** by basing units and lessons around a connected series of concepts and understandings
- **Implementing a unit design framework** that focuses on texts, question sequences, daily tasks, and an end-of-unit task

Building Content Knowledge Through Literacy

- **Willingham, 2016:** Whether or not readers understand a text depends far more on how much **background knowledge and vocabulary** they have relating to the topic than on how much they've practiced comprehension skills. Students need deep knowledge of a subject in order to think creatively or critically about it.
- **Shanahan, 2018:** Research has long shown the importance of **knowledge in comprehension**. If a reader knows much about a topic, his/her reading comprehension rises.
- **Adams, 2018:** All students need access to **high-quality complex texts**. Giving children easier texts when they're weaker readers denies them the very language and information they need to build knowledge.

Unit Starters build knowledge and vocabulary.



Research tells us that reading or listening to a series of texts focused on a rich **concept** (not a theme or topic) can yield as much as **four times the vocabulary growth** (Landauer & Dumais, 1997).


Example: Observable patterns in the Earth, sun, moon, and stars (concept)

Non Example: Stars (topic), friendship (theme)

Unit Starters deepen knowledge of concepts across the grade levels.

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> differences between plants and animals differences between living organisms and non-living materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the structure of plants and the function of the parts the life cycle of plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> many animals use their body parts and senses in different ways species have unique and diverse life cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> internal and external structures that support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction

Unit Starters align with *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*.



Unit Starters support the theory of action and instructional framework that are the foundation of *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*.

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Our Theory of Action

If we provide daily opportunities for ALL students to build skills-based and knowledge-based competencies by...

- engaging in a high volume of reading;
- reading and listening to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level;
- thinking deeply about and responding to text through speaking and writing;
- developing the skill and craft of a writer; and
- practicing foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing...

then, we will meet or exceed our goal of having 75 percent of Tennessee third graders reading on grade level by 2025.

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“Engaging in a high volume of reading”

Texts for Interactive Read Aloud and Shared Reading

TEXT	AUTHOR
On Star	Dr. Brian Lewis
When Males Dip and Night?	Franklyn M. Branley
The Moon Seems to Change	Gail Gibbons
Why Does the Earth Spin? And Other Questions About Our Planet	Franklyn M. Branley
Starry Messenger	Alan Is.
Looking Through a Telescope	Lois Schick
The Big Dipper	Franklyn M. Branley
Constellations: The Stars	Harriet Rock Taylor
The Moon Road	Gail Gibbons
How the Moon Regained Her Shape	Jared Auh Heller
How Moon on the Moon Is Her	Ben Cate
If You Decide to Go to the Moon	Harry McElroy

Find the text lists in the Unit Starter you will teach.



Suggested Resources for Small Group and Independent Reading

TEXT (LEVEL, SERIES & SUGGESTED RESOURCES)	AUTHOR
When the Moon is Full (grades)	Henry Pollack
The Moon Seems to Change	Franklyn M. Branley
Why Does the Earth Spin? And Other Questions About Our Planet	Maria Kay Carson
Starry Messenger	Schodhouse Book
Looking Through a Telescope	National Geographic
Our Sun	Kristine Gorman
Dangerous	Gail Gibbons
There's No Place Like Space: A Car in the Hot Book	Yish Rubin
Face of the Moon	Bob Odeh
Our Stars	Anne Rockwell
The Day is Full of Stars	Franklyn M. Branley
Constellations: The Stars	Harriet Rock Taylor
The Moon Road	Kristine Gorman
How the Moon Regained Her Shape	Jared Auh Heller
How Moon on the Moon Is Her	Ben Cate
If You Decide to Go to the Moon	Harry McElroy

“Reading and listening to complex texts that are on or beyond grade level”

The Big Dipper by Franklyn M. Branley


First Grade,
Interactive Read Aloud
and Shared Reading

Find an example of text complexity analysis in the Unit Starter you will teach.



TEXT COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS	
QUANTITATIVE COMPLEXITY MEASURES	
ADOL.	
QUALITATIVE COMPLEXITY MEASURES	
TEXT STRUCTURE	LANGUAGE FEATURES
The structure of this text is moderately complex. Ideas are organized in a mostly sequential way. However, there is some going back and forth between past and present. (There are multiple references to how people thought about the Big Dipper and North Star “long ago.”) There are two text features in this story, though when they are used, such as picture labels, they are easy to understand and support the text. The graphics/illustrations are mostly supplemental and enhance understanding. For example, when the author explains that the Big Dipper looks different in different seasons, the characters on the page are dressed in different ways corresponding to the seasons, which may help children understand the passage of time. Some graphics, however, are essential to understanding key information. On some pages, the author writes only how “the Big Dipper looks like that” and readers must infer and understand the illustrations to comprehend how the Big Dipper’s position looks different during different seasons.	The language features of this text are slightly complex. Language is straightforward and third and fourth graders in mostly familiar and conversational. The term “Dipper,” which is essential to the text, may be unfamiliar. But the author defines it, with the support of an illustration, on page 12. The names of the stars in the Big Dipper will be unfamiliar to most readers and difficult to pronounce, such as Alkaid, Phecda, and Duhlah. But, these names are not relevant to the main idea of the text. The author shares the Latin constellation names of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, which are also likely to be unfamiliar words, though the text explains that “ursa” means bear, and “major” means big, and that “minor” means little.
KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS	KNOWLEDGE DEMANDS
The purpose of this text is moderately complex. The author does not explicitly state the main idea or purpose of the text, though readers should be able to infer that the Big Dipper is a group of stars, that it looks different at different points in the year, and that people both past and present look for the Big Dipper and North Star for different purposes (i.e., for navigation, as constellations).	The knowledge demands of this text are moderately complex. Most readers will have background knowledge on stars. However, the concept of constellations is important to fully comprehend this text and students without prior knowledge of constellations may have difficulty understanding why people past and present would have interest in finding stars in groups of stars. The text also assumes that readers have some prior knowledge related to navigation. Specifically, it assumes that students have some understanding of cardinal directions and know what a compass is. Without this knowledge, students may have difficulty comprehending why the North Star is important.

“Thinking deeply about and responding to text through speaking and writing”

PAGE/PART OF TEXT	QUESTION SEQUENCE	EXEMPLAR STUDENT RESPONSE
	Teacher's Note: Given the complexity of portions of this text, adjustments to shared reading methods might be made for certain sections of this text that present new or challenging information to students (e.g., shared reading with teacher's voice as the text, echo reading, etc.). As needed, sections for these adjustments might include pages 12-14, 19-22, 24, and 29.	
Page 10	Teacher's Script: "Let's stop and think about what we learned about stars so far. Take a few seconds to think of one fact you've learned about stars, and then tell it to your partner."  (This is an opportunity for a collaborative talk structure.)	Answers will vary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some stars are bright. • Stars look like dots, but you can't touch them because they're far away. • Stars look different in summer and in winter. • Some stars can be seen in both summer and winter.
Page 13	On these pages, the author uses the name Big Dipper. But, the author doesn't tell us exactly what the Big Dipper is. Using the words and illustrations from the text and what you already know about stars, what do you think the Big Dipper is?	The Big Dipper is a group of stars that look like a water dipper. A water dipper has a handle and a bowl.

Find an example of a question sequence and daily task in the Unit Starter you will teach.



“Developing the skill and craft of a writer”

End-of-Unit Task, First Grade

Part 1:

- You are an astronomer working for U.S. Space and Rocket Center. You have been asked to create a student-friendly brochure that you will share with students during a school field trip that explains (1) observable patterns in the day and night sky, (2) the seasons that impact Earth, and (3) the phases of the moon. Use illustrations and descriptions to explain these observable patterns.
- Your brochure should include:
 - a front cover that illustrates and names the topic of the brochure;
 - a section that illustrates and describes observable patterns from the day and night sky and explains why we observe those patterns;
 - a section that illustrates and describes the pattern in Earth's seasons and explains why changes in season occur; and
 - a section that illustrates and describes phases of the moon and explains why we observe those patterns.
- Be sure to:
 - provide some sense of closure;
 - use details from the texts we have read; and
 - use vocabulary words from the word display in our unit.

Part 2:

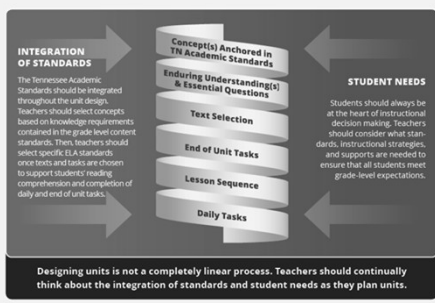
- When you're almost finished with your brochure, practice presenting your information to a co-worker (student partner) before you deliver it to the students on the field trip. Seek your co-worker's feedback on your writing.

“Practicing foundational skills that have been taught explicitly and systematically and applied through reading and writing”

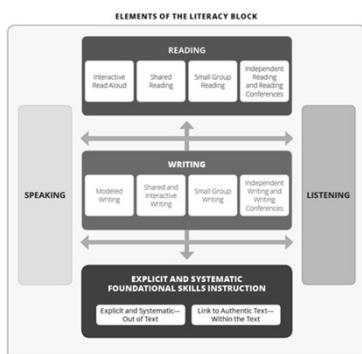
- Unit Starters provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge of foundational skills through reading and writing.
- The Unit Starters do not provide explicit lessons for foundational skill instruction.

Unit Design Framework

FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE



Elements of the Literacy Block



Why teach with Unit Starters?

- Unit Starters support students in listening to, reading about, and thinking about a high volume of texts at a range of complexity levels.
- Students engage with texts throughout the literacy block through various instructional strategies, including interactive read aloud, shared reading, and small group reading.
- Students speak and write about each text and develop the skill and craft of a writer.
- By reading a high volume of texts on standards-based concepts, students build knowledge, vocabulary, and conceptual understanding.

What are educators saying about Unit Starters?

- "The Unit Starters that have been implemented at Martin Primary School, when taught with fidelity, lend themselves to scores in the highest levels of the rubric on the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). Observation scores of lessons from the Unit Starters have been consistently above expectations. The excitement and knowledge that the students are showing is absolutely amazing! Unit Starters are very rewarding to teachers and administrators alike!"*

— Lea Ann Crowe, Assistant Principal

How could teaching with Unit Starters lead to high scores on TEAM?

What are educators saying about Unit Starters?

- *"The Unit Starters have affected our instruction in a very positive way. More complex texts are being chosen. Teachers are taking a more facilitative role in the classroom. Students are thinking more deeply about texts they are reading and speaking and writing more about what they have read. Students are developing a rich vocabulary while also learning more about the world around them. Unit Starters have changed not only what students learn, but how teachers teach. The shift in mindset has been amazing."*

— Emily Perry, Instructional Coach

What are educators saying about Unit Starters?

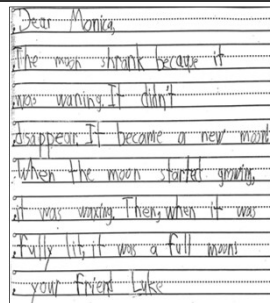
- *"The Unit Starters are incredible because they give true meaning to the phrase 'rigorous classroom instruction.' Prior to the unit, when asked if we were teaching to the highest level possible, we gave a resounding, 'Yes!' However, after implementing the unit, we realized how our previous expectations were not high enough and could not compare to the results of the unit."*

- Rachel Bearden, Rachel Cooper, & Beth Davidson, second grade teachers at Martin Primary School

Sample Student Work – First Grade, Daily Task

- **Daily Task:** Write a letter to Monica explaining that the moon only seems to change, but actually goes through phases.
- **Exemplar Response:** Dear Monica, The moon doesn't actually get smaller. It goes through phases that make it look smaller when it is waning and larger when it is waxing. This is because of the movement and positions of Earth, the sun, and the moon. The moon is a celestial body that we need, so it must stay in the sky. Your friend, _____.

What content knowledge is this student developing? How is this student also showing progress toward mastery of ELA standards?



Dear Monica,
The moon shrank because it was waning. It didn't disappear. It became a new moon. When the moon started growing, it was waxing. Then, when it was fully lit, it was a full moon.
Your friend Luke

Sample Student Work – Second Grade, Daily Task

Daily Task: Write a letter to a friend about some of the changes that can happen due to an earthquake. Include at least four ways earthquakes impact people and places. Also, include information about whether these changes are fast or slow.

Exemplar Response:
 Dear Friend, I wanted to share some exciting information with you that I learned in school today. Did you know earthquakes are happening around the world all of the time, yet most of them we can barely feel? Here are some other important things I learned today. Earthquakes can cause large cities to be destroyed. They can cause lakes or rivers to be moved. They can also cause trees and houses to be destroyed. When the plates move under water, they can cause large waves such as tsunamis which could drown out entire villages. Earthquakes can be so scary! They are acts of nature that are very devastating and happen very quickly. I will write you more when I learn some new facts to share!
 Your friend, Student Name

Sample Student Work – Second Grade, Daily Task

Dear Mom and Dad *March 13, 2018*

Did you know that earthquakes cause a lot of damage? They have a Richter scale to see how big the earthquake that are 7 or higher and when that are 2 some earthquakes can kill people and destroy houses and topple big buildings. And they can shake the ground and sometimes they can have tsunamis and can damage highways.

Dear Bryson *March 13, 2018*

Earthquakes can do a lot of damage when the Richter scale is above 7.0 or bigger like 9.0. The Richter scale tells you how big an earthquake can be. Earthquakes can destroy houses, topple large buildings or thousands of people. Earthquakes can burn down lots of city, trees or power lines. Some earthquakes are under the water and can make tsunamis. Tsunamis can make huge waves about over 100 feet tall. Tsunamis can make huge damage to nearly anything because they are very powerful so are earthquakes. Earthquakes can cause floods, landslides or can break highways.

What content knowledge are these students developing? How are these students also showing progress toward mastery of ELA standards?

Pause and Reflect

- Revisit the end-of-unit task for the Unit Starter you will teach, and read the exemplar student response.
- Think of the students in your class:
 - What would it look like for different students to meet the expectations of the end-of-unit task?
 - What would it mean for these students and their learning to be able to complete the end-of-unit task at the level of the exemplar student response?

TN

Part B:

What resources are included in the Unit Starter?

Unit Starter Components

WHAT IS INCLUDED?	WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED?
<p>Resources that serve as the foundation for strong unit planning and preparation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unit concepts ▪ A list of texts to support strong interactive read aloud and shared reading experiences ▪ A list of resources to support small group and independent reading and writing ▪ An end-of-unit task ▪ Question sequences and daily tasks to support approximately three weeks of instruction 	<p>Instructional guidance to meet the diverse and unique needs of students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instructional guidance for small group and independent reading and writing ▪ Modeled, shared, and interactive writing lessons ▪ Instructional guidance and resources for explicit foundational skills instruction <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin-top: 10px;">Note: Reading foundational skills instruction should follow a year-long scope and sequence and be responsive to the unique needs of your students.</p>

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Unit Starter Components

- Unit Starters are **not**:
 - designed to provide comprehensive instructional materials for all essential components of the literacy block;
 - intended to replace time spent in explicit and systematic foundational skills instruction; nor
 - intended to replace science or social studies instruction.

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Planning with Unit Starters

KEY POINT: The Unit Starter provides a rich set of concepts, texts, and resources that are fundamental for unit planning, but are not intended to be a comprehensive curriculum resource. Instead, educators must thoughtfully prepare from the resources that are included in the Unit Starter by adding additional resources as appropriate to meet instructional goals and student needs.

TN Department of Education Professional Learning Package

Planning with Unit Starters

- Teachers can use their knowledge of students and the various instructional strategies of the literacy block to provide additional lessons and resources to support students in understanding the concepts of the Unit Starter.

TN Department of Education

Planning with Unit Starters

Example 1: A teacher uses multiple sources of data to place students in small groups. She finds texts from the Unit Starter's list of suggested resources for small group instruction that match the unique needs of each group.

TN Department of Education

Planning with Unit Starters

Example 2: A teacher plans supplemental modeled and shared writing lessons where students learn and practice skills similar to those they will be expected to demonstrate on the Unit Starter's daily writing tasks, which students complete independently. The modeled and shared writing lessons help scaffold instruction and prepare students for independent writing.

TN Department of Education

Planning with Unit Starters

Example 3: A teacher has a group of students who are below grade level and who sometimes have difficulty keeping up with the Unit Starter's on-grade-level texts. To make sure these students have opportunities to read texts that match their phase of reader development and that also help build knowledge, the teacher selects independent reading texts for these students that align to the unit's concepts.

Given what you already know about Unit Starters, what other strategies can you think of for supporting both student needs and the conceptual goals of the unit?

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Part B:
How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?

How do Unit Starters support the teaching of English language arts standards?

- Unit Starters are designed to support rigorous and standards-based instruction in **English language arts**. High-quality, complex texts are selected to build students' knowledge of the units' concepts and enduring understandings. **Based on the quantitative and qualitative demands of these texts, English language arts standards are purposefully and selectively chosen to support students' comprehension.**
- Additional ELA standards for speaking and writing are also included in the Unit Starters to support students' engagement with texts and their completion of writing tasks.

How do Unit Starters support the teaching of English language arts standards?

- The Unit Starters' daily **lesson objectives** are intentionally designed to address learning goals for both content knowledge and English language arts.

LESSON OBJECTIVE(S) FOR THIS READING

Students will understand that the change in seasons is created by the Earth's tilt, which causes different parts of the Earth to receive different amounts of sunlight.

To achieve this understanding, students will:

- retell key details from the text;
- use words and illustrations to describe the relationship between sunshine and the four seasons; and
- use writing and pictures to create a chart that organizes information about the seasons.

Find a lesson objective in your Unit Starter. How does the lesson objective provide goals for both content knowledge and ELA?

How do Unit Starters support the teaching of English language arts standards?

- While Unit Starters are intended to support ELA instruction, they are not an ELA curriculum. That is, **Unit Starters do not encompass all of Tennessee's English language arts standards** (e.g., some speaking and writing standards).
- Teachers should continue to follow a year-long scope and sequence as part of a guaranteed and viable curriculum – and use data to make responsive decisions based on students' strengths and needs – to ensure students receive instruction on the full scope of grade-level standards.

How do Unit Starters support the teaching of English language arts standards?

- **Foundational literacy standards** are not explicitly included in the Unit Starters.
- Teachers should use their knowledge of foundational literacy **standards**, information from **assessments** and **knowledge of students**, and the guidance of a **year-long scope and sequence** to embed foundational literacy lessons into the scope of the unit.
- We encourage teachers to use the **Out of Text/In Text model** for foundational skill instruction that combines explicit and systematic teaching with authentic reading and writing experiences.
- The high-quality texts within the Unit Starter provide ample opportunities for **in-text application** of foundational skills.

How do Unit Starters support the teaching of content area standards?

- Unit Starters are designed to **build knowledge of concepts related to grade-level science and social studies standards**. Unit Starters are designed around a *conceptual hierarchy*, which is a framework for unit design that supports conceptual understanding. Unit concepts and enduring understandings are developed with grade-level science and social studies standards in mind.
- The Unit Starters' daily **lesson objectives** include goals for content knowledge.
- Unit Starters are not intended to replace science or social studies instruction.

How do Unit Starters support knowledge building around content area standards?

Unit Concept:
Observable Patterns in the
Earth, Sun, Moon, & Stars

Enduring Understanding 1
Bodies in space move and change in appearance according to predictable **patterns**.

Enduring Understanding 2
Observations over time helps us detect, describe, and predict **patterns of movement** and change in bodies in space.

Related Science Standards

- 1.ESS1.1: Use observations or models of the sun, moon, and stars to describe patterns that can be predicted.
- 1.ESS1.2: Observe natural objects in the sky that can be seen from Earth with the naked eye and recognize that a telescope, used as a tool, can provide greater detail of objects in the sky.
- 1.ESS1.3: Analyze data to predict patterns between sunrise and sunset, and the change of seasons.

How do we see grade-level science standards reflected in this unit's concepts and understandings?

How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?

- Find the unit concepts and enduring understandings for the Unit Starter you will teach.
 - What connections do you see between these concepts and understandings and the science or social standards they're inspired by?
- Find the list of aligned standards for English language arts.
 - Which ELA standards are covered in this unit? Which are not?

Closing Reflection

- What advantages do you see in teaching with the Unit Starters?
- What challenges might you face?
- What questions do you have about the Unit Starters?
- What information do you need to answer your questions?

Learning Session Summary

- In **learning session 1**, we addressed these questions:
 - What is a Unit Starter?
 - Why teach with Unit Starters?
 - What resources are included in the Unit Starter?
 - How do Unit Starters support standards-based instruction?
- In **learning session 2**, we will address these questions:
 - How are concepts and understandings organized in the Unit Starter?





**Learning to
Application**

Learning to Application

Prior to our next learning session:

- Read the **Guidance for Educators** section of your Unit Starter (begins on p. 3).
- Review the **Unit Overview**, **Unit Content Goals**, **Unit Standards**, and **Text** sections.
- Review at least one set of **daily lesson** resources closely.





Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life.

Excellence | Optimism | Judgment | Courage | Teamwork
